

# #10689

## THE AMAZING CORAL REEF

AIMS MULTIMEDIA, 2004  
Grade Level: 3-9  
20 Minutes



### CAPTIONED MEDIA PROGRAM RELATED RESOURCES

[#8255 DIVE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS](#)

[#10693 PLANKTON: OCEAN DRIFTERS](#)

# The Amazing Coral Reef

## Objectives

- To familiarize viewers with the natural characteristics of coral
- To explain the balance of nature within a coral reef
- To understand the ways in which coral reefs contribute to both animal and human life
- To inform viewers of the environmental threats to coral reefs



# The Amazing Coral Reef

## Synopsis

Stunning visuals highlight this study of one of the world's most striking natural phenomena: coral reefs. The viewer learns how reefs are formed from the limestone skeletons of coral polyps over hundreds, even thousands, of years, and the types of sea life that are dependent on the presence of the reefs. The characteristics of hard and soft coral are discussed, with appropriate film footage of each, and animated maps show the location of the various tropical waters in which reefs are found. The video also details the necessity of the reefs to both animal and human life and lists a number of threats, both natural and man-made, that could destroy these underwater "rainforests" in a matter of decades. Viewers are encouraged to consider the consequences for themselves and the environment of even mundane everyday actions.

## Questions to ask before viewing

1. The teacher may bring in a picture of living coral, a piece of coral, or coral jewelry. If possible, allow students to touch the coral. Ask about its physical characteristics: What color(s) is it? Is it smooth or bumpy? Hard or soft? How does it smell?

2. Where do you think this substance came from? Why do you think so? Do you think it was ever alive?
3. Ask a student to point out Australia on a physical features map and find the markings that indicate the Great Barrier Reef. Ask how they think the reef got so big. Guide students to the idea that corals are living, growing things

## Questions to ask after viewing

1. Why are coral reefs known as "the rainforests of the sea"? (Like rainforests, they support many different species of life.)
2. What are coral polyps? (the animals that produce coral reefs) What are they like and what do they eat? (They are small with sticky stinger tentacles. They eat floating creatures called plankton and zooxanthellae, tiny plant cells.)
3. How do the polyps form reefs? (by attaching themselves to one another and slowly adding layers to their limestone skeletons)
4. What kind of coral resembles plants? (soft coral)
5. What kind of water do corals need to live? (shallow, clear and warm, about 75° Fahrenheit)

6. What were some of the creatures the video showed living in and near coral reefs and what does each do there? (Small fish, sharks, and octopi live there. The small fish seek protection; the sharks and octopi seek food.)
7. Where is the only coral reef in the United States located? (off the coast of the Florida Keys)
8. How do coral reefs benefit humans? (They preserve fish that people use for food; they provide a barrier against the destructive force of the waves; sponges growing in coral produce a medicine for cancer; tourists spend money in towns near coral reefs, etc.)
9. What are some natural threats to coral reefs? (storms, animals such as sea stars) What are some threats from humans? (pollution, dirt from the construction industry, over-fishing, careless tourists, boats and boat anchors, etc.)
10. Activities: Rerun a part of the video displaying the beauty of coral without sound. Have students jot down notes on what impresses them most and then write a poem about the coral.

Also: Have students research how experts get coral to grow in aquariums and report to the class, or invite an expert from a local aquarium shop to speak to the class about aquarium reefs.

### Annotation

The viewer learns how reefs are formed, the types of sea life that are dependent on the presence of the reefs, and the location of the various tropical waters in which reefs are found. The video also details the necessity of the reefs to both animal and human life and lists a number of threats, both natural and man-made, that could destroy these underwater "rainforests" in a matter of decades.

### Length

20 Minutes

### Subject Areas

Life Science, Environmental Science

### Audience Level

Grades 3-8

### Catalog Number

2935-EN-VID

### Related titles in the AIMS collection

#8025-EN-VID The Living Reef

#8634-EN-VID The Coral Reef: A Living Wonder

#8384-EN-VID Animal Life in a Tide Pool

#8882-EN-VID Beneath the Caribbean

#8846-EN-VID Beneath the South Pacific



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